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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 150 (2014) 447 – 454

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences10th International Strategic Management Conference

The Effects of Envy on Job Engagement and Turnover Intention

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Abstract

Over the past 15 years managing employees' emotions is seen as one of the main way in order to be successful on global environment. While positive emotions have gained particular momentum through positive organizational behavior and positive organizational scholarship negative emotions in the workplace have been neglected. This study presents envy that is one of the rampant negative emotions in the workplace (Tai et.al.,2012). The study also outlines how envy affects job engagement and turnover intention. By studying 111 white-collar employees, and using regression analyses, we found that (1) feelings of envy influences emotional engagement, (2) feelings of envy affects propensity to leave and (3) emotional engagement impacts intention to leave. The study contributes to understanding the role of negative emotions on employees. The empirical findings of this research will lead practitioners and scholars with theoretical and managerial implications.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the International Strategic Management Conference.

Keywords: Negative emotions, envy, turnover intention, job engagement

1. Introduction

Since the study of Hoschild's (1983) there has been a tremendous growth of interest in research and theory in the arena of emotions in organizational life (Ashkanasy,2003). In organizational behavior field the impact of emotions on attitudes, behavior, cognition and personality have been investigated. Scholars are fragmented and focus in a number of aspects of emotions (i.e. experiences, causes, and consequences) at work. It is not surprising, because organizations are composed of people and people have emotions (Akgün et. al,2009). The developing field is characterized by scholars a diversity of topics such as emotional labor, emotional intelligence, emotional capability, affective events theory, intergroup emotion theory and affects infusion theory. The diversity generates inconsistency for defining emotions in the literature. The definition of emotion is not clear. First, there is ambiguous definition between emotion, affect and mood. While mood reflects to lasting affective states that need not be responses to specific events, emotions imply short responses to specific events. The word of emotion is derived from the Latin *promotionem* meaning to move forward. Emotions are fundamentally a social phenomenon and defined as individuals' dynamic reactions to an object or event (Barclay et. al, 2005). Moreover, levels of analysis in emotions research in organizations are not clear too. Ashkanasy (2011) developed an integrated five-level model of emotion in organizations for clarifying this gap. Five-level model of emotion identifies, within person, between persons, interpersonal interactions, group and organization-wide levels. In organizations through interpersonal interactions, employees experience positive or

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negative emotions. While positive emotions are associated with events that facilitate the fulfillment of an individual's objectives; negative emotions are associated with events that hinder the fulfillment of objectives (Barclay et. al, 2005). For example people feel anger when they are under rewarded (Barclay et. al, 2005) or feel happy when they accomplish a task.

After the positive psychology movement (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 200), scholars investigate the role of positive emotions for enhancing extraordinary performance. The role of positive emotions on productivity and innovativeness has been demonstrated both theoretically and empirically through broad and build theory (Frederickson, 2001). Besides, negative emotions emerging in the workplace or carried from home affects work performance negatively and threaten productivity and destroy cooperation among colleagues in the workplace. Although positive emotions have relationship with positive outcomes, positive emotions may hinder positive outcomes or, negative emotions have relationship with negative outcomes, negative emotions may foster positive outcomes in organizations.

The study responds to the call for more research into emotions by focusing both negative and positive consequences. To address this gap, we investigate both negative and positive consequences of envy. Envy is one of the negative emotions that occur in organizations frequently. In the study we evaluate both light side and dark side of envy.

Accordingly, the paper is structured as follows. First, envy is examined. In this section, the concept of envy and being envied is investigated. Second, the relationship between envy and job engagement is explained. Third, the association among envy and turnover intention is investigated. Fourth, the relationship between job engagement and turnover intention is revealed. Then, the empirical results are provided. Lastly, suggestions for future researches and information for practitioners are presented..

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Employee Envy

Early research on leader behavior conducted by psychologist in 1950s-60s, much of the studies on leadership In recent years there is a shift from trait affect and mood to discrete emotions (Gephart et. al., 2009). Scholars use Lazarus and Cohen-Charash's (2001) list of discrete emotions (i.e., anger, anxiety, fright, guilt, shame, sadness, envy, jealousy, joy, pride, relief, hope, love, gratitude and compassion) for understanding the role of emotions in organizational context. Envy is one of the meaningful construct in the workplace that has powerful emotional influence on employees (Vecchio, 2000). Envy is defined as a negative emotion felt that occurs a person lack another's obtaining outcomes (superior quality, achievement or possession) that are personally desired (Charash and Muller, 2007). Since Aristotle's time, envy is classified as malicious or benign envy. Notwithstanding benign or malicious, envy is an unpleasant emotion (Smith and Kim, 2007) and both of them is the sensation of pain (Tai, 2012). While malicious envy examines envy with negative attitudes and behaviors and refers to ill will and hostility, benign envy emphasizes motivating aspects of envy and identified as admiring and emulative (Tai, 2012). The two views have different consequences. Malicious envy engenders negative outcomes whereas benign envy positive outcomes. Van de Ven et. al (2009) demonstrated the distinction between malicious and benign envy empirically.

Envy is a pervasive emotion that has been found in most culture and is felt by most people (Smith et. al., 1999). The competition for scarce resources, for time and for promotions generates and triggers envy in most organizations too. Employees compare their benefits, advantages and salaries with colleagues through formally and informally mechanisms and differentiation promotes competition among coworkers and foster greater feelings of envy. Duffy et.al. (2012) conceptualized workplace envy in three related ways. First, envy conceptualized as a situational which refers to general envy of others in an environment e.g. workplace; then as dispositional envy which indicates to a tendency generalized across all situations and lastly as episodic envy that shows an emotional reaction to a specific event. In this study we follow Duffy et.al (2012) and take the first view. In organizations envy and its work related consequences have been realized. Envy is important in organizations is that, envy is an interpersonal concept. Grounded in social exchange theory, organizations allow both tangible and intangible exchanges among coworkers. Through the exchange envy can lead to negative outcomes. For instance, envy reduces friendship ties and hinders knowledge sharing among coworkers. The other consequence of envy is poor health. Envy is linked mental-ill health such as depression and stress. Envy leads to poor mental health and depressive tendencies and poor mental health

engenders health care costs in organizations. Goetzel et. al (2001) demonstrated that more than fifty percent of the total costs is associated with poor health.

2.2. *Employee Envy & Job Engagement*

In industrial/organizational psychology, engagement is a popular concept. Because in today's workplace, managers want to develop working conditions, inspire employees to be engaged, give their best, go to the extra mile and persist in the face of difficulties (Baker and Schaufeli, 2008). In the literature engagement has been defined and measured in many different ways such as employee engagement, work engagement, job engagement and organizational engagement. For example; Schaufeli (2006) defined engagement as opposite of burnout and characterized via three dimensions; vigor, dedication and absorption. Besides, Kahn (1990) defined engagement as the harnessing of employees selves to their work roles through physically, cognitively and emotionally energies. Employees are engaged as psychologically present, full there, attentive, feeling, connected, integrated and focused in their role performances (Rich et.al., 2010). Engaged employees expend energy on work willingly. Moreover, scholars argue that engagement overlaps with better known and established constructs such as commitment, involvement and organizational citizenship behavior (Saks,2006). Engagement consists of emotional, cognitional and behavioral components and engaged employees are in organizations through their body, mind and soul. These characteristics of engagement distinguish from the other concepts. Accordingly, in the study we follow Kahn's work to explain relationships among employee envy and job engagement.

Job engagement is characterized by the active use of emotions (Saks,2006). Job engagement is one behavioral response to envy. In workplaces the existence of competitive reward systems engenders feelings of envy and reward and recognition is associated with job engagement (Maslach et.al.;2001). In terms of the distribution of rewards, when employees have high perception of injustice among coworkers, they disengage themselves from their work roles (Saks,2006). From equity theory one can argue that employees who compare what they receive to what they contribute with the corresponding ratios of referent others lead to envy within the relationship (Tai,2012). A lack of fairness cause employees to disengage themselves from their work roles through (Saks,2006) physically, emotionally and cognitively. Besides, competition among coworkers for rewards generates feelings of envy that leads to burnout the opposite concept of engagement (Maslach et.al.;2001). Moreover, as a negative emotion, envy leads to stress. In workplaces stress leads to exhaustion and exacerbates burnout. Additionally, envy reduces friendship ties, and hinders positive interpersonal relationships and leads to experience negative social interactions among coworkers. Negative social interaction at work leads to disengagement in their work roles throughout each day. Last but not least, interpersonal envy is important in the workplaces which cause violence and aggression. Envious employees remove themselves from particular task behaviors and that it is the root of employee disengagement. In other words, employees having aggression feelings might become less engaged to their job. Envious employees sweat to put their physical, cognitive and emotional energies into role performance context and tend to lower engagement in their job. Envious employee in a job may be cognitively attentive to the job or endeavors physical energy. However, engagement reflects the simultaneous investment on cognitive, emotional and physical energies completely involved in the full performance of a role (Rich et. al.,2010). Accordingly, we propose,

H1: Employee envy is negatively related to job engagement.

2.3 *Employee Envy & Turnover Intention*

Envy is a psychological state with negative individual, interpersonal and collective consequences (Tai et.al, 2012). One of the negative consequences is turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization (Tett and Meyer,1993). Turnover is an attentive concept for both micro and macro level researchers at many disciplines. At the micro level through organizational behavior perspective, the relationship between job satisfaction and total firm costs; at the macro level the association between aggregate level of economic activity and employment levels (Mobley et.al,1979) have been investigated. Envy is an unpleasant and uncomfortable emotion and associated with physical and psychological pain (Duffy,2012). Physical and psychological pain foster frustration and stress in the work place. When envy leads to stress, and people experience stress everyday and cannot deal with stress effectively, turnover will be an attractive solution for employee. Vecchio (2000) indicates the unique powerful role of employee jealousy and envy on propensity to quit. From a different viewpoint, leader's superior qualities, skills and status is envied by employees (Tai, et.al,2012). Envy among leader and subordinate foster turnover intention. The low-quality connection between leader and follower affect propensity to leave (DeConnick,2009).

Empirical studies have revealed that the quality of the relationship among leader and employee effects intention to leave. Lower quality exchange relationships between leader and subordinate is related with lower propensity to remain in the work place (Schriesim et.al.,1999). Thus, we propose and test the following hypotheses:

H2: Employee envy is positively related to turnover intention.

2.4. Job Engagement Turnover Intention

In recent years, turnover is a serious problem in organizations in terms of the need to recruit and train employees (Thanacoody et.al,2014) and as a consequence there has been a great deal of interest in strengthening employee attachment. Engaged employees are more likely to remain with their current employer (Shuck and Reio, 2014) while disengaged employees intent to leave their organizations. For example, employees who experience negative work circumstances develop a negative spiral of emotions resulting in burnout that foster leave to work. If an employee feels cognitively disengaged, he/she feels unsafe at work and wants to leave (Shuck and Reio,2014). In a similar vein, emotional disengagement weakens belongings of the organization and decreases their intention to maintain in the organization and looking for alternative job elsewhere. The final dimension of engagement is behavioral engagement that has a negative relationship with turnover intention like cognitive and emotional engagement. Employees who are behaviorally disengaged are ready to withdraw their energies physically and want to leave. Disengaged employees have not adequate motivation for attention and absorption in a role in work place (Rothbard, 2001). As argued these effects foster employee to seek another work in dynamic work environment. Empirical studies have revealed that the relationship between intention to leave organization and each dimension of engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) exist. However, despite the significant potential linkage, the empirical relation among Kahn's operationalization of engagement and intention to leave has yet to be shown. Therefore, we hypothesize that;

H3: Job engagement is negatively related to turnover intention.

Research Model

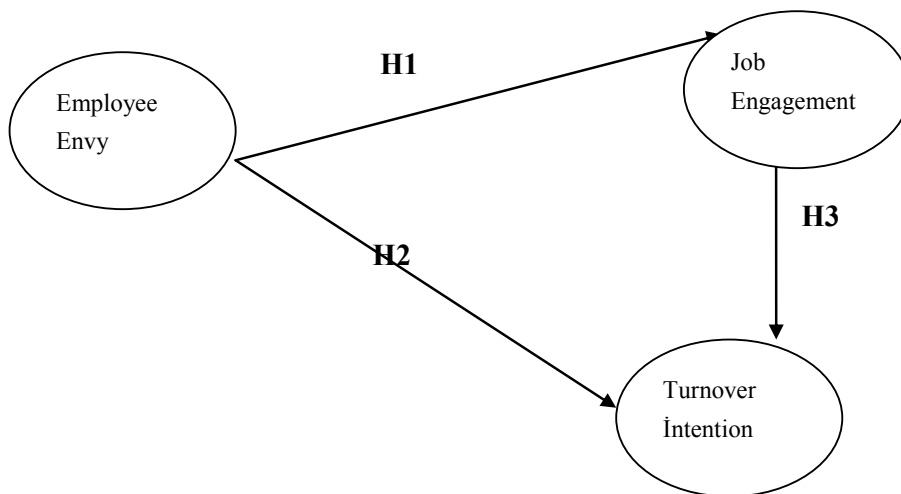


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

3. Research Design

3.1. Sample and data collection

In order to test the proposed hypotheses, one hundred and eleven employees working in organizations operating in Turkey Marmara Region were surveyed. The data were gathered through the use of questionnaires distributed either via e-mail or face to face interviews. The questionnaire was composed of four parts. The first part was designed to investigate the demographics of participants and the second section includes items to measure employee envy and being envied, the third part was designed to measure job engagement and the last part includes items to measure turnover intention. All participants in the survey are working under a supervisor. Most of the participants had bachelor's degree. The questionnaire was prepared following an exhaustive literature review and all constructs were measured with existing scales. All items were measured on a five point Likert-type scale where 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

3.2. Measures

Employee Envy: Employee envy was measured using 5 items adapted from Vecchio (2005). An example item is "Most of my coworkers have it better than I do". Being envied was measured using 3 items. An example item is "Some of my coworkers are envious of my accomplishments".

Job engagement: Job engagement was adopted from Rich et. al. (2010) and was measured using 18 items including three dimensions, namely physical, emotional and cognitive engagement. Physical engagement was measured with six items. An example item is "I devote a lot of energy to my job". Emotional engagement was measured with six items. An example item is "I am excited about my job" Cognitive engagement was measured with items. An example item is "At work, I concentrate on my job".

Turnover intention: Turnover intention was measured by four items adopted from Kelloway et. al. (1999) (cf. Chen et.al ; 2011). An example item is "I am planning to look for a new job".

3.3. Factor Analysis

We used SPSS software for the evaluation of our data. Factor analysis, correlation, reliability tests, the means of the variable and regression analysis were used to analyze the relationships between variables of the research model.

Varimax rotational, exploratory factor analysis in SPSS software has been used to evaluate factor structure for the variables. KMO (0,822) and significance value ($p=0.00$) shows that our sample is suitable for the hypothesis analysis. Since some items were below 0.50 or were having collinearity with more than one factor, and some factors contains one item, it is continued to perform factor analyzing by removing the items one by one till the obtained ideal table. Envy and turnover intention items as expected took place in one factor. Moreover, the results of factor analyses indicate that job engagement has three dimensions. We used the Cronbach's Alpha to estimate reliability for scales. Each scale had satisfactory reliability with Cronbach's Alpha above 0.70. Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations and correlations for the variables used in the study. Reliabilities are located along the diagonal of the correlation matrix. According to correlation analysis, all variables are correlated with each other as expected.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Coefficients

	S.D	MEAN	1	2	3	4	5
1.Envy	,85480	2,3514	(,752)				
2.PE	,75809	3,9707	,185	(,868)			
3.EE	,76421	3,8153	,- 357(**)	,173	(,910)		
4.CE	,82374	3,9127	,-028	,683(*)	,360 (**)	(,915)	
5.TI	1,2885	2,9931	,387(*)	,-064	,469(*)	,241()	(,893)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level SD = Standard Deviation () = Cronbach's alpha

PE:Physical engagement EE: Emotional engagement CE: Cognitive engagement TI: Turnover intention

3.4. Analysis and Results

To test our hypotheses, we performed a series of multiple linear regression models. In order to test the first hypothesis stating that “Employee envy is negatively related to job engagement” regression analysis is performed. The results of the regression analysis showed that there is a significant effect of envying others on job engagement ($\beta = -.357$ Sig=000). Therefore, first hypothesis is partially supported. Although there is no significant effect of envy on physical and cognitive engagement, the results of the regression analysis showed that there is a negative significant effect of envying others on emotional engagement. For testing the second hypothesis that “Employee envy is positively related to turnover intention” regression analysis is done. Results indicate, there is a significant effect of envying others on intention to leave ($\beta = .387$ Sig=000). So our second hypothesis is supported. To test our last hypothesis stating that “Job engagement is negatively related to turnover intention” regression analysis is performed. Findings indicate that the relationship between emotional engagement and turnover intentions is statistically significant ($\beta = -.431$ Sig=,000). Therefore H3 is partially supported.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables							
	PE		EE		CE		TI	
Envy	,185	F=3,672 DW=1,642 R ² : ,034	-,357 **	F=15,185 DW=1,97 R ² : ,127	-,028	F=0,80 DW=1,62 R ² : ,001	,387 **	F=17,397 DW=1,860 R ² : ,150
PE							-,431 *	F=10,683 DW=1,607 R ² : ,236
EE								
CE								

PE:Physical engagement **EE:** Emotional engagement **CE:** Cognitive engagement **TI:** Turnover intention

Table columns contain standardized beta coefficients. “bold” values are significant. (**p<0.01, *p<0.05)

DW: Durbin Watson value

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study is to enlighten the role of envy in the workplace for providing success in the firms through job engagement. For this aim, a model was developed and tested that explicates employee engagement and intention to leave to feelings of envy. Following the call from Tai et.al (2012), the study contributes the social and organizational science.

The first contribution of the present study to the literature is the findings about relationship between feelings of envy, job engagement and turnover intention in a single model. Notably, we did not find any correlation between feelings of envy and physical and cognitive engagement. The study illustrated that feelings of envy is negatively associated with emotional engagement. Second, this study showed that feelings of envy influences to propensity to leave. In this study, we empirically demonstrated that when employees experience envy, it has a negative effect on their behaviors. Lastly, that being said, we find it curious that only one of the dimensions of job engagement was significantly related to turnover intention in our research context. While physical and cognitive engagement dimensions are not significantly related with turnover intention, emotional engagement is negatively related to turnover intention.

From a practical point of view, our research demonstrates emotionally engage employees generally have low turnover intention. Emotional engagement creates enthusiasm for work.

As a conclusion of the research we can state that, the management should disseminate feelings of envy. In this respect, management should establish a fair benefit system and promote managers to create supportive and fairness conditions. Employees often experience envy as a result of comparison benefits and advantages at work with their colleagues. Besides, management takes steps for providing envy among colleagues. Therefore, envy leads to mental health and this has a cost for firms. Managers should highlight positive consequences of envy. Envy should play a

motivational role in the workplace. The benign role of envy should be emphasized. Envy may play a driver role for positive organizational change through benign envy effect. Insofar as envy is an inherent emotion of today's competitive workplace, management should endeavor to establish organizational culture include negative emotions and their positive consequences. Specifically human resource managers have to deal with employees' emotions (Muchinsky, 2000).

Future studies can investigate the negative effects on envy in organizations such as retaliation, revenge, sabotage, theft. On the other hand, the positive consequences of envy should be investigated. According to Lindebaum and Jordan (2012) positively valenced emotions can have negative outcomes, whereas negatively valenced emotions can have positive outcomes. Whereas the traditional view of envy highlights its negative effects, the alternative view captures envy's positive effects on organizations. Envious parties want to reconnect successful envied coworkers. Envy may foster employees' motivation for working and they are more likely to be productive. An additional future direction for future research the moderating effect of environmental conditions should be investigated. Future studies should investigate the underlying causes of envy among colleagues and employee and manager. It need to be understood and addressed.

Finally, this study is not without limitations. There are some methodological limitations to this study. Specifically, our hypotheses are tested by regression analyses using SPSS, since the sample size in the study is inadequate to perform SEM analyses. Besides, the study was conducted in Turkey. For generalizing the results different cultural contexts are needed.

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